Lesson 3: Stand Firm in Your Faith!

**Lessons in this series:** [1](http://www.teensundayschool.com/358/lesson/behave-yourself.php) [2](http://www.teensundayschool.com/374/lesson/prayer-expecting-results.php) **3**

**Lesson Workbook (PDF)**

LESSON OBJECTIVES

Goals

1. To show how Paul’s encouragement for the early church still applies today
2. To challenge students to stand firm in their faith during trying times
3. To equip students with tools they need to persevere

Topics

Body of Christ, Community, Encouragement, Endurance, Hardship, Peer Pressure, Perseverance, Stand firm

Scripture Memorization

1 Corinthians 16:13-14

OPENING PRAYER (5 to 10 minutes)

GROUP BUILDING (5 minutes)

Have students pair up. Have one partner stand still with his or her feet together, while the other partner tries to knock the opposing person off balance. *(This will be an easy thing to do.)*

Next, have one partner stand with his or her feet shoulder length apart. The objective is the same: Try to knock your partner off balance. *(This should prove to be more difficult.)*

Last, have each partner stand back to back. You, as the leader, will go around and try to knock each pair off balance. Students may stand any way they like, doing anything to be firmly planted on the ground. After the activity, bring the class back together as a group.

GETTING STARTED (5 minutes)

**General Discussion:**• When was it easiest to stand firm? When was it the hardest?
• What was it like when each pair worked together and I tried to knock you over? What made you stronger?
• Relate this to standing firm in life. When is it easy to stand firm? When can it be difficult?

DIGGING IN (30 minutes)

We are going to study 1 Corinthians 16:5-24. This is the end of Paul’s letter to the church in Corinth. It's main message is what we’ve already discussed—an encouragement to stand firm.

Before we dig into that idea, let’s read this entire passage straight through. We’ll look at these passages in more detail later in the lesson.

**Read 1 Corinthians 16:5-24**

**Discussion Questions:**1. Summarize Paul’s message in three words. *(“Don’t give up,” “stand firm always,” “always follow Jesus,” etc)*2. What is the tone of this passage? *(Happy, sad, disappointed, joyful are a few examples.)*3. How do you think the Corinthians heard these words? *(With open ears, with skepticism, with open hearts, etc.)*

With all those things in mind, let’s go back through this passage and flesh out the four truths found in its message:

**Truth #1: Life is Uncertain**Paul mentions the uncertainty of life several times in this passage. Some of it is about himself and some is about others. I think we can agree—there isn’t much guaranteed in life.

**Read 1 Corinthians 16:6, 16:7, 16:10, 16:12 (Again)**

**Discussion Questions:**1. What words are used here to indicate uncertainty? *(“If,” “perhaps,” “hope,” “if the Lord permits,” etc.)*2. What are some things in your life that are uncertain?*(How long you will live, where you will go to college, who you will marry, etc.)*3. Why do you think the Lord allows so many uncertainties in life? *(People tend to turn to God more during uncertain times. Seeing how God works in our lives during uncertain times helps us trust Him and builds our faith.)*4. How can the uncertainties of life motivate you to stand firm?*(Allow for discussion.)*

 **Truth #2: You Cannot Do It Alone**Take a minute and have the students read over 1 Corinthians 16:5-24 again silently.

**Discussion Questions:**1. How many names did Paul mention in this text? *(Seven.)*2. What do you think these people meant to Paul?
3. How do you think they aided Paul in walking through difficult times?

You can all probably think of a time when you felt alone. We are not meant to be alone. That’s why God gave us families, spouses, and even the Church. Did you ever wonder why most people tend to live together in cities and towns? It's because naturally and instinctively, we need other people.

**General Discussion:**• How does depending on others help us stand firm?

 **Truth #3: The Kingdom is Big!**Paul’s “Final Greetings” are recorded in verses 19-24. Let’s re-read them together.

**Read 1 Corinthians 16:6-7, 16:19-24**

**Discussion Questions:**1. What is Paul looking forward to?*(Seeing them again during a substantial visit.)*2. In addition to greetings, what else does Paul extend to his recipients? *(Grace, love, warmth, affection.)*3. What do you think it was like for Paul to say “goodbye"? *(It's dificult to say goodbye to friends.)*4. Do you get the sense that Paul is saying “goodbye” or something else? If it is something else, what is he trying to say? *(That those who do not love the Lord will be cursed and that He is looking forward to the Lord's return.)*In a very real sense, Christians never say goodbye but “see you later.” This is because when Christian separate, they are not leaving the Kingdom of God; they will meet again. The Kingdom is big.

**General Discussion:**• How can realizing the vastness of the Kingdom help you to stand firm?

MAKING IT REAL (20 minutes)

This is all great in theory, but how do we apply it to our lives?

**Application #1: Be a Bubble
Read James 4:13-14 together, out loud.**

Life is uncertain not only in what will happen during our lives, but also how long our lives will last. Paul understood this. James did too. We also need to know that life brings with it no guarantees.

**General Discussion:**• What sticks out to you in this passage? What images come to mind? *(Mist, vanishing, etc.)*• Is it wrong to make plans? *(No, Proverbs talks about planning as a wise thing.)*• Does James say we should never plan ahead, or that we should just wait for the right moments to depend on Jesus? *(No, the point is to live each day according to God’s Will.)*

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| **Optional Activity**Blow some bubbles for your group. Have them pop as many as they can. Maybe have them stay seated to see how many they can reach, or scoot on their knees to track them down. Encourage them to try their hardest to pop as many as they can. |

At the end of the day, your life is like a bubble. It is here for a second, and then it is gone. What are you doing with your time? Are you persevering through difficult things? Are you staying faithful to Jesus until the end? Are you living out a life of courageous faith? My challenge to you is plain: be a bubble that counts until the second it is popped.

 **Application #2: My Ten List**Most of Paul’s letters, like 1 Corinthians, end with a list of names. Each of us has a list of names of people who we hold very dear. They may not always be in our presence, but they are our closest friends and allies. They are advisors, dear friends, family members, and sources of encouragement and wisdom.

I want each of you to come up with the names of ten people who belong on such a list. Take just a few minutes to do that right now.

*(Have students write ten names in the space provided in their workbooks. Optional: Have students share their list among the group.)*

Maybe you need to say thanks to one of these people today. Maybe you need to pray they are doing well, no matter where they are. Maybe you can give them a call, shoot them a text, or send a Facebook message to encourage them. Make plans to do that by the end of the day tomorrow.

 **Application #3: Widen Your View**I want you to stand up if this is true of you:

• You like tacos.
• You are embarrassed when you make a mistake in front of other people.
• You are a morning person.
• You don’t have your driver's license.
• You like rap music.
• You are from a broken family

**General Discussion:**• How many of you felt more comfortable when others were standing with you than when you stood alone?
• Why do you think you felt better when others stood with you?
• How can standing alone be hard?

Now, let me share with you some facts about the church around the world:

• 33%, or 2 billion people worldwide, are Christians
• The U.S.A., Brazil, and Mexico reportedly have the three largest population of Christians
• An average of 171,000 Christians are martyred for their faith each year
• The Bible is the best-selling book of all time
• 83 million Bibles are distributed each year
• There are as many as 100 million Christians in China, where being a Christian is illegal.

**General Discussion:**• Do you think you are alone in your faith?
• If people in China can stand firm, can you?
• If 171,000 people die every year for loving Jesus, can you put up with some teasing by your friends?
• How does realizing how big the Kingdom is encourage you?

CLOSING PRAYER (2 minutes)

I want everyone to get back with his or her partner from the beginning of the lesson. I want you to pray for each other this simple prayer:

Lord Jesus, please help (insert your partner's name here) stand firm in his or her faith. In Jesus’ name, Amen.